

Facts About State Certification for Plumbers

F627-022-000
[04/2003]

The Department of Labor and Industries administers plumber certification laws. Anyone who works in the plumbing construction trade must be certified as a journeyman, residential specialty or backflow specialty plumber.

Individuals learning the plumbing trade are required to carry trainee certificates. See Section 18.106 RCW (Revised Code of Washington).

What are the classifications of plumbers in Washington State?

- Journeyman plumbers are qualified to work in all phases of the plumbing construction trade. Medical Gas endorsements are only issued to active journeymen who have completed a 32-hour medical gas training course approved by L&I.
- Residential specialty plumbers are limited to installation, maintenance and repair of the plumbing in single-family dwellings, duplexes and apartment buildings that do not exceed three stories.
- Backflow specialty plumbers are limited to maintenance and repair of existing backflow prevention assemblies within a building. This does not include installing or replacing backflow prevention assemblies.

How does someone become certified to work as a plumber?

You must meet certain qualifications and pass an examination, or become certified through mutual exchange (reciprocity) agreements with other states. For more information, call L&I's Plumber Certification Section, 360-902-5207.

To qualify for examination, you must document your work experience according to the following requirements:

- Journeyman plumbers: 8,000 hours, of which 4,000 must be commercial or industrial work.
- Residential specialty plumbers: 6,000 hours.
- Backflow specialty plumbers: Requires a copy of an active Backflow Assembly Tester certification from the Washington State Department of Health.

All work experience must be performed under the supervision of an appropriately certified plumber. To become certified you must score at least 70 percent on each section of the exam.

What is on the journeyman/residential specialty exam?

This is a closed book, three-part examination based on Washington State's current plumbing code. It also includes water, and waste and vent sizing from schematic drawings. The exam provides the Drainage Fixture Units Value Table 7-3, Water Supply Fixture Units Table 6-4, Fixture Units Table 6-5, and Flushometer Fixture Units Table 6-7. No other tables will be provided.

What is on the backflow specialty exam?

The exam is made up of questions relating to safety, regulatory, operation and troubleshooting of backflow prevention assemblies.


May I supervise plumber trainees on the job site?

Yes. You may supervise trainees under the following conditions and ratios of plumbers to trainees:

- One plumber trainee for every certified journeyman plumber installing medical gas. Supervision is required for 100 percent of the time while installing medical gas.
- One plumber trainee for every certified journeyman plumber working on a commercial job site. Supervision is required for a minimum of 75 percent of the time at each separate job site.
- Two plumber trainees for every certified residential specialty or journeyman plumber working on a residential job site. Supervision is required for a minimum of 75 percent of the time at each separate job site.
- One backflow trainee for every certified backflow specialty plumber working on a commercial job site. Supervision is required 100 percent of the time while performing backflow assembly maintenance and repair.
- Two backflow trainees for every certified backflow specialty plumber working on a residential job site performing backflow assembly maintenance and repair. Supervision is required 100 percent of the time while performing maintenance and repair of backflow prevention assemblies.

How should plumber trainees document their hours?


All work experience must be performed under the direct supervision of an appropriately certified plumber. Work experience must be documented in affidavit form and signed by the registered contractor.

 **Plumber trainee hours obtained in this state will be credited only if an active Washington state trainee card was in place when the work occurred. See Chapter 18.106.070 (2) RCW.**

(Continued on the back)

I'm a residential/specialty plumber. Do I need a plumber trainee card?

Yes. If you work on commercial job sites, you must maintain an active trainee card and work under the supervision of a certified journeyman plumber.

 **Hours will be credited only if an active Washington state trainee card is in place when the work occurs.**

What are my responsibilities as a contractor performing plumbing?

- To ensure that each person who is performing plumbing on the job site has an active plumber or trainee certification.
- To guarantee that trainees are under the direct supervision of a certified plumber and within the legal ratio.
- If medical gas is being installed, an active medical gas piping installer endorsement is required.
- If backflow assembly maintenance and repair is being performed, an active BAT card and plumber certification is required.

Under what circumstances may L&I audit my records?

L&I may audit a contractor's records for:

- Excessive hours.
- Hours reported for individuals who do not have active trainee cards.
- Hours reported outside the normal course of the contractor's business.
- Hours reported for improper supervision and ratio.

What are the penalties for violating plumber certification/contractor registration requirements?

Monetary penalties range from \$250 for the first infraction and to up to \$1,000 for subsequent infractions. Each day a person is in violation is considered a separate infraction. In addition, each job site at which a person is in violation is considered a separate infraction.

What is the Advisory Board of Plumbers?

The Advisory Board of Plumbers was designed to give citizens a voice in their government and provide a means of influencing decisions. It is comprised of two journeyman plumbers, two members who conduct a plumbing business and a member from the general public who is familiar with the business and trade of plumbing. The board meets on the third Tuesday of January, April, July and October. Meetings are open to the public.

Where can I obtain applications for plumbers and trainees?

L&I's local offices provide applications for plumbers and trainees. Check the state section of your telephone book for the office nearest you. Applications also are available at the Plumbing Certification Section of the L&I web site: www.LNI.wa.gov/scs/plumbing.

This document is available in other formats to accommodate persons with disabilities. For assistance, call 1-800-547-8367. (TDD users, please call 360-902-5797.) Labor and Industries is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**Please read!
New information inside.**

Department of Labor and Industries
Plumber Certification
PO Box 44470
Olympia, WA 98504-4470

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing